

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JERUSA 01242 141641Z

64

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 SAM-01 AID-05 /080 W

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R 141428Z SEP 76

FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8312

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE JERUSALEM 1242

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PBOR, IS, JO

SUBJ: ARAB-ISRAELI CONFRONTATIONS OVER LAND IN AL BIRA AND
HEBRON.

REF: JERUSALEM 1203, 1235

1. THE LOCAL ARABIC PRESS IS FOLLOWING CLOSELY THE ESCALATING
CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE AL BIRA MUNICIPALITY AND THE
REGIONAL MILGOV OVER THE USE OF LAND IN THE JEBEL
TAWIL AREA. AFTER ANNOUNCING THAT THEY WILL NOT ABIDE
BY THE MILGOV'S BAN ON HOUSING IN THE AREA, THE MUNICIPALITY
HAS PROCEEDED WITH PLANS TO OPEN A ROAD AND EXTEND WATER
TO THE AREA. BUILDING PERMITS HAVE ALSO BEEN ISSUED, AND
THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MOSQUE BEGUN. THE MILGOV HAS
RESPONDED BY DETAINING THE MUNICIPAL SUPERVISOR OF
CONSTRUCTION AND A DRIVER ENGAGED IN OPENING THE ROAD.
THE MILGOV HAS ALSO BLOCKED THE ATTEMPT TO
CONSTRUCT THE MOSQUE, AND THE REGIONAL MILITARY GOVERNOR
HAS WARNED AL BIRA MAYOR IBRAHIM TAWIL THAT HE WILL
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PAGE 02 JERUSA 01242 141641Z

BE HELD PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR DEFIANCE OF THE

CONSTRUCTION BAN. RADIO SEPT. 14 REPORTS MAYOR AND OTHER
COUNCIL MEMBERS STAGED SIT-DOWN STRIKE AT MILGOV OFFICES.

2. MEANWHILE, IN HEBRON, MAYOR FAHD QAWASMI HAS
RESPONDED TO A STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO ISRAELI
RELIGIOUS MINISTER RAPHAEL DURING A VISIT TO HEBRON
SEPT. 13 CALLING FOR THE RETURN OF JEWISH PROPERTY
IN HEBRON TO JEWS WHO CAN PROVE THEIR OWNERSHIP OF
IT. ACCORDING TO THE ARABIC DAILY ASH-SHA'AB,
QAWASMI SAID THAT THE MUNICIPALITY DOES NOT OPPOSE
SUCH A MOVE IF ARAB PROPERTY IN YAFA, HAIFA, ACRE AND
THE REST OF MANDATORY PALESTINE, IS RETURNED TO ITS
ARAB PALESTINIAN OWNERS. ASH-SHA'AB'S EDITORIAL
SEPT. 14 ECHOES QAWASMI'S STAND.

3. COMMENT: THE AL BIRA MUNICIPALITY PROUDLY CLAIMS
IT RECEIVES NO FINANCIAL AID FROM THE ISRAELIS AND
PREVIOUSLY HAS HAD AS LITTLE CONTACT AS POSSIBLE
WITH THE MILGOV. THE MAYOR IS A YOUNG MAN WITH
LITTLE POLITICAL EXPERIENCE AND IS CONSIDERED A
MODERATE. WHEN LAND NEAR BEIT JALA WAS RECENTLY
ENCLOSED BY THE MILGOV IN ARAB PROTESTS AND APPEALS
REMAINED VERBAL. IT MAY BE THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF
OF THESE VERBAL PROTESTS CONTRASTED WITH THE
SUCCESS OF GUSH EMUNIM'S FAIT ACCOMPLI AT QADDUM
HAVE PROMPTED THE AL BIRA MUNICIPALITY TO CONFRONT
THEIR PROBLEM MORE ACTIVELY.
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